

March 6, 2002

Director, Dr. Jeffrey P. Koenings
Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife
600 Capitol Way N
Olympia, WA 98501-1091

Re: State Hatchery Programs

Dear Dr. Koenings:


The Mountaineers, along with many other conservation and sport fisheries organizations, has long been concerned with the role of state hatcheries in our state fisheries programs. Many organizations have long felt that hatcheries have had an adverse impact on wild salmon stocks and were operated inefficiently and in a way that blocked rivers and streams from wild salmon runs. The Mountaineers is pleased that you, Governor Locke, and other agencies are paying serious attention to the recommendations of the panel of scientists set up by Congress.

We believe that probably more than one hatchery should be closed, and hatchery management should be substantially modified to put priority on protection of wild salmon runs in the same watersheds where the hatcheries are located.

We are pleased that Senator Murray, Representative Dicks, and Billy Frank of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission all have supported the changes recommended by the scientific panel. We encourage the Department to move aggressively forward to protect the wild salmon runs before they become extinct. Hatchery reform could also be an opportunity for significant savings at a time of budget pressures.

Sincerely,

THE MOUNTAINEERS


Glenn Eades
President

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the Natural Beauty
of the Outdoors*

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